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➤CONTRIBUTED NOTES.◀

Azazel (Lev. xvi. 8, 10, 26).—A careful review of the various opinions of expositors respecting this obscure term, which does even appear as a proper name in the versions of Luther and King James I., might not be without considerable interest for readers of this journal. But that is not my present purpose. Indeed, I should hardly have ventured upon such a subject, had I not, in the course of another investigation, quite unexpectedly lighted upon some facts which seem to have a material bearing upon the historical significance of this old world designation.

It is now, I believe, generally admitted that Azazel is the name of an evil spirit, anciently supposed to haunt the wilderness. So much, in truth, is clear from the context of the biblical narrative itself, interpreted without bias and according to the ordinary rules of Hebrew construction. And the evidence of later Jewish writings, such as the Book of Enoch, where we meet with Azazel again, as one of the spirits who fell from heaven, (not to mention what the Rabbis have handed down or invented upon the subject) proves that tradition never lost all sense of the original meaning of this weird figure of primitive theology.

It is a well-known statement of the Talmud, that the names of the months and of the angels "came up" with the restored exiles from Babylon into Judea. As regards the months, every student of Assyrio-Babylonian antiquity knows that the statement is true. As regards the angels, the case is not so clear, inasmuch as the biblical Michael and Gabriel, and the Rabinnical Uriel, Uzziel, Sammael, (identified by some with Azazel), and many others, have not been found hitherto in the cuneiform inscriptions. For Azazel, however, I may now offer evidence which connects both the name and the idea of the desert-fiend with the oldest religious beliefs of Babylonia.

The Chinese language possesses a complex character now pronounced *hi ai* in the common dialect, but *hai* in those of Canton and Amoy, and *y é* in that of Shanghai; sounds which presuppose *ki* and *gi* as their primary forms.* This character is only used in composition with another pronounced *chai* or *chi* in the common dialect, but *ti* in that of Amoy, and *za* in that of Shanghai; sounds which imply as their precursors *ti*, *di*, *za*. Now the compound term consisting of these two characters, *Hiai-chai*, anciently pronounced *Ki-di* or *Gi-di*, is the name of a mysterious being who dwells in the desert, and gores wicked men when it sees them. The creature, which is described as a one-horned monster, like a stag, but is also depicted like a tiger, has another name of importance for our purpose, *Shin-yang*, the "Spirit-goat." Provincial judges and censors once wore a representation of it as their insignia.

The name and the habitat and the function of this "Spirit-goat," who dwells in the desert, and destroys the wicked, curiously corresponds with the name and the habitat and the implied function of Azazel. But I should have hesitated to

* See my papers entitled *The New Accadian* in the *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, especially that in the June number of the present year.

bring the two fiends into direct relation with each other, had I not previously ascertained the identity of the Chinese Avenger of Wrong with an evil spirit of the desert, whose name frequently occurs in the primitive hymns and exorcisms of Accad. As we have seen, the oldest pronunciation of the Chinese demon was Kidi or Gidi; and, as all Assyriologists well know, the Gidi^m was an evil spirit, whereof the early inhabitants of Babylonia stood in religious awe. The resemblance of the two names is striking enough, considering the enormous geographical interval that divides the Middle Kingdom from the land of the Euphrates and Tigris. But there is a further coincidence in the case, which may fairly be called startling, and which demonstrates the validity of our identification of the Gidi of China with the Gidim of Babylon. It is the fact that the Chinese character pronounced hiai (= gi) is compounded of the simple characters for "dog," "horn," "knife," and "ox;" and the Accadian character pronounced gidim^m is composed of four characters which also have these selfsame values.* Thus the Chinese demon agrees with the Accadian in name, ideographic representation, habitat, and nature.

But what of the Hebrew Azazel? No self-evident or satisfactory etymology of this name is forthcoming, so long as it is regarded as a purely Hebrew term. The initial syllable, indeed, affords a sort of assonance with the word for "she-goat" ('ēz); but this hardly accounts for the termination. On the other hand, the first consonant of Azazel may very well have been strong Ain (Ghain); in which case the true pronunciation would be made like Gazazel. With this we may compare a dialectic pronunciation of the Chinese Gidi, viz., the Shanghai ye-za, which implies an earlier gi-za. Of course, we should expect to find, as in other instances, that the Hebrews had given the name a shape more accordant with the analysis of their own language than that in which they originally received it.

The assimilation of the mysterious Azazel of Leviticus to the desert-fiend of primeval Babylon and the "spirit-goat" of the half-forgotten traditions of China, suggest many things in regard to the annual rites of the Great Day of Atonement. How far it bears on the great question of the antiquity of the narrative in Leviticus, and of the ceremonies there prescribed, I must leave to others to determine. Some points, at all events, are clear. (1) The idea of Azazel is even older than the time of Moses by thousands of years, how many no man can say. (2) Azazel is not, as has been suggested, "the crumbling conception of some Semitic or Egyptian idol, shrunk to the dimensions of a desert-fiend."[†] (3) The conception of Satan, the arch-enemy of God and man, has left more traces in the O. T. than is sometimes assumed, and was probably far older in Israel than the time of their supposed contact with Persian ideas. (4) The sending of the live goat into the wilderness "for Azazel" was a highly suggestive recognition of the religious doctrine that, in consequence of sin, the lives of the congregation were forfeited to the Avenging Spirit, who carried out the sentence of Yahweh's righteous wrath. (5) The fact that the goat was not slain but set free in the wilderness, symbolized the truth that Israel was saved, by penitential sacrifices to Yahweh the Saviour, from the power of the Destroyer; and (6) embodied in the plainest

* The Chinese signs are k'üen, kioh, tao, and niu, of which the ancient pronunciation was kin, kak, tar, ngu, respectively. The Accadian sign read gidim is a contracted compound of the (Accadian) signs for KIN, KAK, TAR, NGU.

† Die zu einem Wüsten-dämon zusammengeshrumpfte ruinenhafte Vorstellung irgend eines semitischen oder ägyptischen Abgottes. Reihm: *Hwb. Bibl. Alt. s. v. Asazel*.

manner a prohibition of devil-worship (cf. Lev. XVII. 7). It would seem that in this, as in so many other instances, Mosaism has purified and adopted the conceptions and practices of immemorial religion.

C. J. BALL.

Three Contract Tablets of Ashuritililani.—Among many other important tablets which were excavated during the stay of the *Expedition of the Babylonian Exploration Fund* at Niffer, in 1889, were three contract tablets belonging to the reign of Ašûritililâni. For the sake of convenience, I will call these tablets 1, 2 and 3. No. 1 was found on the 14th of February, and it was on the 28th of the same month that Prof. Hilprecht read the date as Nippûru arḫu šabâṭu ûmu 20. m. ilu Ašûr-êtil-ilu (*sic*) šar mâtu Aš-[šur-Ki]. It is, perhaps, the half of a large reddish-gray tablet, the obverse side being badly mutilated, the reverse, on the other hand, being very well preserved. The name of the king is not so clear, as one would judge from Prof. Hilprecht's remarks in *ZA.*, IV., 2. He himself queries his own reading. If the name is to be read Ašûritilili, this brings nothing new, since it is so written on his brick published in *I R.*, p. 8. This tablet has passed into the hands of the Turkish government and hence we may never expect to see it again.

Of much greater importance are Nos. 2 and 3, both of which were excavated on March 4th, and were identified by me on the following day, after they had been cleaned, as belonging to Ašûritililâni, cf. the *Academy*, April 30, 1889, and *ZA.*, IV., 2. Both of these tablets were handed over to the government, but were later on presented to me by my friend Bedri-Bey, the Turkish Commissioner to the Expedition. They are now in my possession. After publishing them, it is my purpose to present them to the University of Pennsylvania.

No. 2 is a small blackish-grey contract, or rather loan tablet, $4.3 \times 3.1 \times 1.2$ cms. in size. It is almost perfectly preserved. A small piece was broken off, however, while it was being handled by the officers in the custom house at Iskanderûn. The following is a brief summary of the contents of this tablet, viz.: Adar-aḫê-erêb has loaned eight shekels of silver to a man—about whose name there is some doubt. From the first day of Araḫšamna it is to bear interest at the rate of one-half shekel. A list of four witnesses follows, and then, what is of most importance to us, the date, viz.: Nippûru araḫ Araḫšamna umû l šattu 4 Ašûritililâni šar mâtu A-šûr-Ki. In my note to the *Academy*, I read the date of the year as 6. I was, perhaps, a little too enthusiastic at the time about my find and hence was inclined to make the date as large as possible. It can be read 6, but it is better to regard the two lower wedges as prolongations of upper wedges and to make the number 4.

No. 3 is a greyish-brown loan tablet, $5.1 \times 3.8 \times 1.2$ cms. in size. It is badly broken and the names of the parties concerned in the contract are not legible. The date reads: Nippûru araḫ Addaru—day lost—šattu 2 Ašûritililâni šar mâtu Aššûr. This tablet also was somewhat damaged by the rough handling of the Turkish custom officers.

The value of these tablets is from a chronological and historical stand-point. They make it necessary for Assyriologists to change their views in regard to the date of the separation of the Babylonian from the Assyrian empire, cf. *Academy* and *ZA.* as cited above. I hope to publish the text of Nos. 2 and 3 in the next number of *HEBRAICA*.

ROBERT FRANCIS HARPER, *Yale University*.